FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Swamp Harriers preying on Senegal Turtledove.—While walking along the edge of Bennett's Brook, Bassendean, on January 25, 1954, I flushed two Swamp Harriers *(Circus approximans)* from a small cleared patch of ground almost surrounded by short reeds (*Juncus* sp.). They had left a freshly-killed immature Senegal Turtledove *(Streptopelia senegalensis)*, partly eaten and with numerous feathers strewn about the ground. The Harriers flew to a tree about 20 yards away but eventually disappeared.

—DONALD N. CALDERWOOD, Beacon.

Flight speed of *Phaps chalcoptera*.—On the afternoon of February 7, 1954, ten miles west of Popanyinning, I paced, in a late model Vanguard car, a Common Bronzewing *(Phaps chalcoptera)* for an approximate distance of 200 yards at, according to the speedometer, a steady 40 miles per hour.

After flying up the road about a chain in front of the car for the estimated distance, it suddenly veered off to the right and disappeared into the scrub. —BRIAN V. TEAGUE, Narrogin.

***Oreoica gutturalis* at Williams in 1945.**—As it extends somewhat the usual range of the species, it may be of some interest to place on record that a Crested Bell-bird *(Oreoica gutturalis)* was observed by me in the immediate vicinity of the 90-mile peg on the Perth-Albany Highway, early in the winter of 1945.

The exact location was on the south side of the road, in a paddock which has since been cleared and tilled, but which at that time was a thicket of regrowth saplings of *Eucalyptus redunca*.

The bird was first heard but not sighted, on May 23, and upon making a special search on May 27 I was, after much patient watching and calling, able to closely though briefly observe it several times. It was, however, extremely shy. The bird was subsequently heard calling, in its unmistakable ventriloquial voice, on the afternoons of June 14 and 15 of the same year.

—BRIAN TEAGUE, Narrogin.

Observations on a Long-tailed Wasp, *Megalyra shuckardi* West.—When walking with me along the banks of the Helena River, West Midland, at 4.30 p.m. on February 14, 1954, my young son Bruce pointed out a black and white spotted wasp on the trunk of a flooded Gum *(Eucalyptus rudis)*. It was one of the Long tailed Wasps *(Megalyra shuckardi* West.*)*. Its ovipositor was inserted into a crack in the dried bark below it. I carefully removed the bark behind the wasp and uncovered the tunnel of a longicorn beetle.

Making sure I did not alarm the wasp, I worked up towards her and almost immediately came across a beetle nymph. Further cutting disclosed the ovipositor of the wasp still working down towards the nymph. Anxious to see whether the wasp bored through the wood or worked its ovipositor through cracks, I

opened up the remainder of the tunnel at 5.05 p.m. but disturbed the wasp. However, I held the ovipositor in my fingers to be sure it remained in position. The ovipositor had passed through the outside centre plug of chewed wood which blocked the entrance and entered the tunnel close to the wood on the bottom of the gallery. It had followed cracks, but had forced the silk lining of the inside of the plug.

I brought home both the nymph and the wasp. On February 23 the nymph passed its final stage, and the resultant beetle was identified as *Tryphocaria princeps* Blkb. (W.A.M. 54. 1577).

This longicorn beetle is common in the flooded gum, and always excavates its typical chamber under the bark before retiring to its burrow, which it then seals with a plug of chewed wood with silken material inside, prior to the metamorphosis that changes it to the adult.

This specimen was too far down the tunnel for the wasp to have reached it with its ovipositor.

—A. DOUGLAS, W.A. Museum.

Notes on the Behaviour of Bee-eaters.—Between January 1 and 3, 1954, a Bee-eater's *(Merops ornatus)* nest at Mooliabeenie (approximately 60 miles north of Perth) was under observation from a hide sited nearby. The burrow had been drilled at a shallow angle into sandy ground and the ramp of excavated spoil emphasised the position of the nest which was directly beneath a roadside telephone line. From the persistence of their calls well-grown young were in occupation. Bee-eaters were locally abundant here. A good deal of this pair's prey was sighted from their perches on the wires and branches near the nest; dragonflies and bees seemed to predominate in their catch. Insects were always held at the tip of the beak and no attempt was made to remove the wings before carrying to the young. The larger dragonflies proved difficult to handle and the birds would beat them against the wires or branches until dead. On one occasion a bird flew to the wire with food and after alighting handed the prey to its mate; whether this was an instance of male feeding female or vice versa it was impossible to tell since the sexes were not separable. The close relationship of the Bee-eaters to the kingfishers was evident in several aspects of their behaviour quite apart from obvious anatomical similarities e.g. the very short legs. Thus the motions involved when a bird flicked a dragonfly into the air to regrasp it in a more convenient position seemed precisely the same as are used by the European Kingfisher *(Alcedo atthis)* when it flicks a fish into the air to adjust it ready for shipping into the maw of one of the nestlings. Again, the Bee-eaters did not find it necessary to go far down the tunnel to dispose of their food; presumably the young came part way towards the entrance to meet them. The old birds emerged tail first just as the European Kingfisher does in the same circumstances. Likewise the chirruping chorus of the nestlings which began as soon as the calls of the adult Bee-eaters were heard from their perches